

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method of processing a wafer, comprising:  
2 providing a wafer having initial thickness variations between two  
3 surfaces of said wafer;  
4 processing said wafer through a first module, said first module  
5 comprising apparatus for performing a grinding process, a clean process and a metrology  
6 process, and said processing therethrough includes said grinding process, said clean process  
7 and said metrology process;  
8 defining an edge profile on said wafer; and  
9 processing said wafer through a second module, said second module  
10 comprising apparatus for performing a double side polish (DSP) process, a clean process and  
11 a metrology process, and said processing therethrough includes said DSP process, said clean  
12 process and said metrology process.
- 13 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said first module processing further  
14 comprises an etch process, said etch process reducing said wafer thickness by less than about  
15 ten (10) microns.
- 16 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said first module processing precedes  
17 said defining said edge profile.
- 18 4. The method of claim 1 wherein said first and second modules each  
19 comprise a cluster tool defining a clean room environment.
- 20 5. The method of claim 1 wherein said first module metrology process is  
21 simultaneous with said grinding process.
- 22 6. The method of claim 5 wherein said first module metrology process  
23 produces a metrology profile for said wafer, said processing through said first module further  
24 comprising modifying said grinding process in response to said metrology profile.
- 25 7. The method of claim 1 wherein said first module metrology process is  
26 after said grinding process.
- 27 8. The method of claim 1 further comprising polishing said edge of said  
28 wafer after said defining said edge profile.

1                   9.       The method of claim 1 further comprising processing said wafer  
2 through a third module, said third module comprising apparatus for performing a finish polish  
3 process, a clean process and a metrology process, and wherein said processing through said  
4 third module comprises said finish polishing process, said clean process and said metrology  
5 process.

1                   10.       The method of claim 9 further comprising, after completion of said  
2 processing through said third module, providing said wafer directly to a process chamber for  
3 fabrication of a semiconductor device.

1                   11.       The method of claim 9 further comprising, in order after completion of  
2 said processing through said third module, cleaning said wafer, inspecting said wafer,  
3 packaging said wafer, and delivering said wafer to a wafer process facility for subsequent  
4 fabrication of a semiconductor device. MC

1                   12.       The method of claim 1 wherein said wafer has a total thickness  
2 variation (TTV) between said two surfaces of less than about 0.3 microns after said  
3 processing through said second module.

1                   13.       The method of claim 1 wherein said wafer has a SFQR of less than  
2 0.12 microns after said processing through said second module.

1                   14.       The method of claim 1 further comprising processing said wafer  
2 through at least a portion of said first module prior to processing a second wafer through said  
3 first module.

1                   15.       The method of claim 1 further comprising laser marking said wafer  
2 prior to said defining said edge profile.

438 1                   16.       The method of claim 1 further comprising performing a donor anneal  
2 process prior to said defining said edge profile.

1                   17.       The method of claim 1, further comprising processing said wafer  
2 through a third module, said third module comprising apparatus for performing said defining  
3 said edge profile, and an edge polishing process, said processing through said third module  
4 comprising said defining said edge profile and said polishing said wafer edge.

1                    18.    A method of processing a wafer prior to device formation thereon, said  
2 method comprising, in order:  
3                    providing a wafer having first and second surfaces and a peripheral  
4 edge;  
5                    grinding said first and second wafer surfaces;  
6                    defining an edge profile of said wafer, and polishing said peripheral  
7 edge; and  
8                    polishing said first and second wafer surfaces.

1                    19.    A wafer processing system, comprising:  
2                    a grinder for grinding first and second wafer surfaces;  
3                    an etcher for etching said wafer;  
4                    a cleaner for cleaning said wafer; and  
5                    a metrology tester for testing a metrology of said wafer;  
6                    wherein said grinder, etcher, cleaner and metrology tester are  
7 contained within a first clean room environment.

1                    20.    The wafer processing system as in claim 19 further comprising a  
2 transfer mechanism adapted to transfer said wafer from said grinder to said etcher within said  
3 first clean room environment.

1                    21.    The wafer processing system as in claim 20 wherein said transfer  
2 mechanism comprises a robot.

1                    22.    The wafer processing system as in claim 19 further comprising a  
2 second clean room environment, said second clean room environment comprising:  
3                    an edge grinder for defining an edge profile of said wafer; and  
4                    an edge polisher for polishing said wafer edge.

1                    23.    The wafer processing system as in claim 19 further comprising a third  
2 clean room environment, said third clean room environment comprising:  
3                    a polisher for polishing said wafer;  
4                    a cleaner for cleaning said wafer; and  
5                    a metrology tester for testing said wafer metrology.

24. The wafer processing system as in claim 19 further comprising a fourth clean room environment, said fourth clean room environment comprising:

a finish polisher for polishing said wafer;  
a cleaner for cleaning said wafer; and  
a metrology tester for testing said wafer metrology.

25. A wafer processing system, comprising:  
means for grinding said wafer;  
means for cleaning said wafer;  
means for testing a wafer metrology;  
wherein said means for grinding, cleaning and testing are contained within a single clean room environment; and  
means for transferring said wafer between said means for grinding and said means for cleaning, within said clean room environment.